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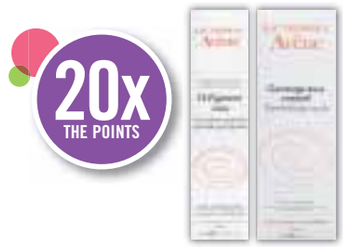

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ALFONSO CUARÓN TALKS ABOUT GETTING SPACE RIGHT IN HIS THRILLER, GRAVITY
PAGE 7

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At the provincial Legislature on Tuesday, Health Minister Dustin Duncan announced $10 million for an "Urgent Issues Action Fund" to tackle serious problems found at seniors' care homes. MARCO VIGLIOTTI/METRO

'Urgent' $10M fund set up to fix problems at seniors' homes

Quality of life. Critics say money is either a 'good start' or weak response to huge issue

MARCO VIGLIOTTI
marco.vigliotti@metronews.ca

The Saskatchewan government is putting $10 million forward to tackle serious problems found at seniors' care homes through internal reviews, though critics say the province should do more.

"We are committed to making improvements that address these issues and improve quality of care and quality of life for seniors," Health Minister Dustin Duncan said on Tuesday in announcing the "urgent issues action fund."

Duncan added that the government will also contribute $2.5 million to expand the Regina-based Home First/Quick Response pilot program to the Saskatoon and Prince Albert Parkland health regions.

A report on recent reviews by health region chief executives highlights a variety of issues, including infrastructure woes at facilities under the purview of the Regina Qu'Appelle Health Region and "toileting" delays that resulted in residents "soiling themselves" in Saskatoon.

Duncan said he is "disappointed" by several findings, including concerns about privacy and food quality.

"Some of the issues cited speak to an overall quality-of-life standard that we undoubtedly need to address," Duncan told media at the legislature.

"Specific incidents can only be categorized as unhygienic, unsafe and unacceptable."

Maura Davies, CEO of the Saskatoon Health Region, said that although the funding represents a "good start," it won't "ultimately address the larger issues of adequate staffing or the condition of some of our facilities."

NDP Leader Cam Broten, who has long criticized the Saskatchewan Party government over the state of the province's long-term care facilities, charged that $10 million is a limp response to an "urgent" problem.

Deficiencies

"Specific incidents can only be categorized as unhygienic, unsafe and unacceptable."

Health Minister Dustin Duncan

"It doesn't nearly go far enough in addressing the very concerning state of seniors' care in Saskatchewan," Broten told Metro.

"We need better staffing levels in care facilities and better standards."

Before receiving money from the action fund, health regions must submit plans by the end of the month on how they will use it.

Duncan said he expects funding to begin rolling out in December.

NEWS 1

Saskatchewan resident dies from West Nile virus

In the past. The last fatality in the province from the virus occurred in 2007

ALYSSA MCDONALD
alyssa.mcdonald@metronews.ca

A Saskatchewan resident has died from the neurological syndrome of the West Nile virus.

"This is the first death, unfortunately, from West Nile in the last five years," Dr. Saqib Shahab, the province's chief medical health officer, said on Tuesday of the virus in Saskatchewan.

Shahab, however, offered little insight into the death, refusing to reveal even the victim's gender, age or general region of residence while citing what he described as patient confidentialities.

He did confirm that the victim died within the past two weeks from the neurological syndrome.

Including the death, there have been five confirmed West Nile cases — four men and one woman between the ages of 40 and 70 — in the province this year, while four of them have had the serious neurological symptoms of the virus.

Shahab said he could not confirm how many of those people have been hospitalized.

"The most severe form of West Nile — the neurological syndrome — is more likely to present in individuals who are older and more likely to result in serious outcomes, even death, if there are underlying factors," he said.

"But again, that may not always be the case."

On Sept. 20, though, Shahab confirmed that a man in his early 60s from the Five Hills Health Region had been in hospital for a few days with neurological symptoms. Shahab would not confirm on Tuesday whether he's the one who perished.

The neurological syndrome affects only one per cent of those who contract the virus. Many other people who contract West Nile experience minor symptoms, if any.

Saskatchewan has also had one confirmed asymptomatic blood donor and seven additional suspected cases under investigation this year.

The last West Nile fatality in Saskatchewan occurred during an outbreak in 2007 when six people died and nearly 1,500 became infected.

Saskatchewan's chief medical health officer, Dr. Saqib Shahab, speaks to media on Tuesday in Regina about the West Nile virus death. ALYSSA MCDONALD/METRO

A semi-trailer becomes the first truck to use the overpass across the Trans-Canada Highway on Tuesday. ROSS ROMANIUK/METRO

Overpass unveiled, improving flow of city traffic

It's a bridge toward better times for the Regina area's commercial truck traffic.

Safety and a steadier flow of goods in and out of the Global Transportation Hub (GTH) are among the benefits that were touted on Tuesday during the official opening of an overpass where the West Regina Bypass connects with the Trans-Canada Highway.

"This kind of infrastructure is so important to keep attracting more investment and more companies," Bryon Burnett, councillor for the city's Ward 4, told Metro as the structure was opened to traffic.

"It's just an exciting time in Saskatchewan and in Regina to see all this economic activity."

The overpass — a key part of the four-lane West Regina Bypass, under construction from the Trans-Canada to Dewdney Avenue at a cost of $113 million — has come with a $43-million price tag following about two years of work.

Its ceremonial opening saw a semi-trailer truck, carrying Highways and Infrastructure Minister Don McMorris, driven through a ribbon while construction crews continued to work on sections of the span — including one ramp yet to be completed.

Bryan Richards, CEO of the GTH Authority, said the structure will end long, dangerous left turns for trucks onto and off Highway 1 at Pinkie Road.

"This is kind of the start of the whole bypass around Regina, especially the west side here," McMorris said, noting that the eight-kilometre project has "$70 million left to spend moving from here out toward Dewdney Avenue, where that will all be twinned over the next year — hopefully completed by next fall."

ROSS ROMANIUK/METRO

High risk

Search on to find sex offender

Police in Lloydminster are asking for the public's help in locating a high-risk sex offender who removed his electronic monitoring bracelet.

Edmonton native Michael Sean Stanley, 48, arrived on Tuesday in Lloydminster,

Michael Sean Stanley RCMP

where he cut off the electronic tracking device and left it on the roof of a business on the 4300-block of 54th Avenue.

Stanley, who has a history of abducting children from playgrounds, is wanted for breaching court release conditions.

RCMP describe Stanley as five-foot-nine and 190 pounds with black hair and brown eyes. They said he might be driving a purple 1996 Chevrolet Trail Blazer with possible Alberta plate BHD1954.

Anyone with information on Stanley is asked to contact RCMP in Lloydminster at (306) 825-6350. METRO

Fatal stabbing

Arrest made in N. Battleford homicide

An arrest has been made in the stabbing death of a 20-year-old Saskatoon man, whose body was discovered Monday morning at a hotel room in North Battleford.

Saskatoon native Nicholas Clifford Giroux, 36, has been charged with second-degree murder in the death of 20-year-old Thang Sian Mang, police confirmed Tuesday.

North Battleford RCMP discovered Mang's body at a hotel on the 900 block of 101 Street after responding to reports of a stabbing just after 4 a.m. on Monday.

Upon arriving on the scene, police also found a 35-year-old man with non-life threatening injuries in the hotel lobby. METRO

They stand on guard. Five notable women seek gender-neutral O Canada

Demanding change: Margaret Atwood, left, Kim Campbell, Nancy Ruth, Vivienne Poy and Sally Goddard. THE CANADIAN PRESS/FILES

A group of notable Canadian women is launching a campaign for gender-neutral language in the English lyrics of O Canada.

The group says the change would restore the national anthem to its original gender-neutral intentions.

The group — which includes author Margaret Atwood and ex-prime minister Kim Campbell — has set up a website to promote the idea.

It is calling on Canadians to join the campaign and encourage Prime Minister Stephen Harper's government to change the line "in all thy sons command" to "in all of us command."

RestoreOurAnthem.ca is being launched on the 100th anniversary of the change made to Judge Robert Stanley Weir's original English lyrics.

The coalition says for no documented reason the lyrics were revised in 1913 from "thou dost in us command" to "in all thy sons command" and it's time to make a change to reflect the inclusive intentions of the original lyrics.

Other members of the group include Senator Nancy Ruth, author and fashion designer Vivienne Poy and Sally Goddard, mother of Nichola Goddard, the first female Canadian soldier killed in combat.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Cross about cross. Values charter sparks topless row in Quebec legislature

A topless protest interrupted the daily question period in Quebec's national assembly Tuesday, in a screaming semi-nude denunciation of the controversial values charter.

Women began removing their clothes while Premier Pauline Marois was answering a question.

Shouts erupted in the gallery and everyone's eyes, including the premier's, drifted upward.

As the protesters disrobed, they chanted a slogan against the presence of the crucifix in the chamber. Security guards pulled a trio of half-naked protesters away and struggled to dress them.

The protest was over a Parti Québécois proposal that would leave the crucifix in the chamber; Christmas trees would remain in public offices; and the giant cross would stay above Montreal's Mount Royal.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Last to leave, please switch off the lights

America shuts down. 800,000 federal workers sent home as historic wrangle over health care shutters many U.S. agencies

U.S. showdown

The extraordinary U.S. shutdown was caused when a long-running dispute over President Barack Obama's health-care law stalled a temporary funding bill.

The U.S. Congress hung "Closed" signs on a big swath of government Tuesday.

About 800,000 workers were sent home.

Barricades sprang up at the Lincoln Memorial and other monuments.

The National Park Service was turning off 45 fountains around Washington D.C.

Agencies like NASA and the Environmental Protection Agency were virtually shuttered.

More than a third of the federal civilian workforce was furloughed — equivalent to the combined workforce of Target, General Motors, Exxon and Google.

And on Capitol Hill, Democrats and Republicans traded blame for the first partial government shutdown in nearly two decades. But people classified as essential government employees — such as air traffic controllers, Border Patrol agents and most food inspectors — worked.

So did members of the military and employees such as State Department workers who issue passports and visas.

With the Republican-controlled House and Democrat-controlled Senate at a stalemate, it was unclear how long the shutdown would last — or who the public would blame for unanswered phones and locked doors.

"There has to be better ways to run the government than to get to a standstill like this," said Cheryl Strahl, who travelled from California to take in New York City sites.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Amid the shutdown ...

Life-or-death stuff: Obama

Hailing it as an "historic day," President Barack Obama pressed forward his flagship health-care program Tuesday.

"This is life-or-death stuff," Obama said. He said tens of thousands of Americans die each year for lack of health insurance, and others go bankrupt.

"Today we begin to free millions of our fellow Americans from that fear," he added.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Go home, folks: A U.S. Park Police officer helps to close down the Martin Luther King Memorial in Washington D.C. on Tuesday.
MARK WILSON/GETTY IMAGES

Reactor clogged

A tsunami of jellyfish nukes nuclear plant

It wasn't a tsunami but it had the same effect:

A huge cluster of jellyfish forced one of the world's largest nuclear reactors to shut down

The Oskarshamn nuclear plant in Sweden had to scramble reactor No. 3 on Sunday after jellyfish clogged the pipes.

But by Tuesday, the pipes had been cleaned.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Climate change?

'Refugee' seeks a haven from rising tides

A man from one of the lowest-lying countries on Earth is trying to convince New Zealand judges that he's a refugee — suffering not from persecution, but from climate change.

The 37-year-old and his wife left his remote atoll in the tiny Pacific country of Kiribati six years ago for higher ground and better prospects in New Zealand, where their three children were born. Immigration authorities have twice rejected his argument that rising sea levels make it too dangerous for him and his family to return to Kiribati.

Kiribati is an impoverished string of coral atolls about halfway between Hawaii and Australia. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Murder, marriage

Judge jails him ... then officiates at his wedding

Danne Desbrow and his fiancée, Destiny, were married — just minutes after he was sentenced to 53 years-to-life in prison for first-degree murder, reports say.

San Diego Superior Court Judge Patricia Cookson officiated at both events.

She even reportedly baked a cake for the ceremony.

Desbrow was sentenced for a 2003 killing after a witness with key information came forward recently.

His lawyer argued Desbrow was defending himself in a fight.

After the sentencing, deputies locked the courtroom doors and Cookson married the couple.

The couple kissed and Cookson went back to her chambers.

Moments later, she appeared with two pieces of vanilla bundt cake on paper plates with plastic forks.

Destiny Desbrow said the judge baked the cake herself.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Punk band

Pussy Riot member ends her hunger strike

A jailed member of the punk band Pussy Riot is ending her hunger strike nine days after it began, Russian officials say.

Nadezhda Tolokonnikova began it to protest violations of rules covering work conditions in the penal colony where she is serving a two-year sentence for denouncing Russian leader Vladimir Putin. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Libya

Torture rampant in jails run by militias: Report

Torture is widespread in Libyan jails run by militias that toppled Moammar Gadhafi's regime in 2011, according to a UN report released Tuesday.

UN investigators, who had periodic access to various detention centres, said there is evidence that 27 people have been tortured to death in the prisons, 11 of them this year, according to a report by the UN High Commissioner for Human Rights and the UN Support Mission in Libya.

"In some cases, members of the armed brigades freely admitted, and even tried to justify, the physical abuse of detainees," the report said.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Foreign affairs

Canada doing 'everything it can' to secure release of 2 held in Egypt

At the behest of Prime Minister Stephen Harper, the government is doing "absolutely everything it can" to secure the release of two Canadians held without charge in Egypt, Foreign Affairs Minister John Baird says.

More than seven weeks after they were arrested at the height of civil unrest in Cairo, Toronto filmmaker John Greyson and London, Ont., doctor Tarek Loubani were ordered detained for another 45 days on the weekend.

"The government, at the prime minister's direction, has been engaged in a big way to secure the release of these two Canadians," Baird told a news conference Tuesday.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Terrorism

Official: Somalia 'not worried' about al-Shabab

Somali militants al-Shabab are on their "last legs," the East African country's deputy leader said Tuesday, a little more than a week after the al-Qaida splinter group stormed a shopping mall and left dozens dead — including two Canadians.

"Al-Shabab are on their last legs. They lost numbers, they lost morale, they lost ground," Somalia's deputy prime minister Fawzia Yusuf Adam said during a visit to Ottawa.

"They are only in small pockets. So, we are not worried about them ... we are in control of the situation."

Al-Shabab arose from chaos that gripped Somalia after armed warlords ousted the country's longtime military dictator from power in 1991.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

Animal-rights activists hold solemn memorial

Animal Liberation Victoria activists hold dead animals at Federation Square on Tuesday in Melbourne, Australia. More than 200 activists gathered with the bodies of dead animals to publicly grieve. Animal Liberation Victoria is against the treatment of animals as "property" and promotes a vegan lifestyle. Also on Tuesday, wildlife officials in Zimbabwe said at least 91 elephants were poisoned with cyanide by poachers who hack off their tusks for the lucrative illegal ivory market. GRAHAM DENHOLM/GETTY IMAGES

Chemical arms team enters Syria

Tight deadline. Netherlands-based group has nine months to find, dismantle and destroy Assad's arsenal

Wading into the world spotlight, international inspectors arrived in Damascus on Tuesday to begin the monumental task of overseeing the destruction of Syria's chemical weapons in the middle of a civil war.

The inspectors from a Netherlands-based chemical-weapons watchdog have around nine months to complete their mission: finding, dismantling and eliminating President Bashar Assad's estimated 1,000-ton arsenal.

Their task has been endorsed by a UN Security Council resolution that calls for Syria's chemical stockpile to be scrapped by mid-2014. The deadline is the tightest that the experts from the Organization for the Prohibition of Chemical Weapons have ever faced.

Experts at The Hague, where the OPCW is based, said Sunday the inspectors' priority is to reach the first milestone of helping Syria scrap its ability to manufacture chemical weapons by a Nov. 1 deadline, using every means possible.

The destruction mission could include smashing mixing equipment with sledgehammers, blowing up delivery missiles, driving tanks over empty shells or filling them with concrete, and running machines without lubricant so they seize up and become inoperable.

Some of the inspectors will be double-checking Syria's initial disclosure of what weapons and chemical precursors it has and where they are located. Others will begin planning the logistics for visits to every site where chemicals or weapons are reported to be stored.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Arrival in Damascus

An advance team of 19 inspectors and 14 UN staff members arrived in Damascus late Tuesday afternoon in a 19-vehicle convoy escorted from the Lebanese border by two Syrian Foreign Ministry representatives.

- The experts set up a logistics base for its immediate work, the UN said in a statement.

Myanmar. Buddhist mobs kill woman, torch homes

Buddhist mobs killed a 94-year-old Muslim woman and torched more than 70 homes on Tuesday as sectarian violence again gripped Myanmar's Rakhine state despite a visit by President Thein Sein, officials and residents said.

With attacks reported in several villages on the outskirts of Thandwe, where tensions have been mounting for days, the number of causalities could rise.

More than 700 rioters, some swinging swords, took to the streets in Thabyuchaing, about 20 kilometres north of the coastal town on Tuesday afternoon, police officer Kyaw Naing said.

An elderly Muslim woman died from stab wounds in the clashes that followed, the officer said, who also put the number of houses set on fire at between 70 and 80.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Romania. Mass grave near labour camp confirmed

Authorities on Tuesday confirmed the existence of a mass grave containing prisoners' remains near the site of a former communist labour camp in eastern Romania. The discovery bolsters the case of investigators seeking genocide charges against the former commander of the penal colony.

A statement from the government's Institute for Investigating the Crimes of Communism laid out the official findings. It said five skeletons were found — one's right foot was missing, one had a dislocated spine and another's legs were tied together.

Institute chief Andrei Muraru said the discovery revealed "brutality and primitivism in the management of the colony."

The excavation, took place from Sept. 14 to Sept. 19 in a remote part of the Danube Delta near the former labour camp.

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Ebook service bets readers will buy into subscriptions

Publishing. Scribd, HarperCollins offer access to thousands of titles for monthly fee

Online document-sharing site Scribd is taking a page from Netflix's success story as it sets out to create the world's largest subscription service for digital books.

The opening chapter in Scribd's quest began Tuesday with the introduction of an e-book subscription service that will boast thousands of titles published by HarperCollins before July 2012. HarperCollins, which is owned by News Corp., becomes the first of the five largest U.S. publishers to join a service vying to create an alternative to buying individual titles.

Scribd will charge $9 US per month for a service that offers unlimited access to most of HarperCollins' back catalogue, as well as an assortment of other books from smaller publishers. Recent bestsellers from HarperCollins aren't included in the subscription service, although customers will be able to buy new titles individually on Scribd's site.

"I feel we are moving into new uncharted waters, but that's what innovating and reading is all about," HarperCollins CEO Brian Murray said in an interview. "I feel like this is the right deal with the right partner at the right time and we are going to learn."

Scribd is trying to create the book industry's version of Netflix Inc.'s online video service, which has attracted more than 37 million subscribers who pay $8 per month to watch a wide selection of movies and TV shows.

Different model

- If it's successful, Scribd could help publishers cultivate an alternative to the electronic bookstores run by Amazon, Apple and Google.
- Scribd CEO Trip Adler, 29, has raised $26 million US in venture capital since he started the San Francisco company six years ago to help his father post a paper about neurosurgery online.

"For power readers, this is going to be like a dream come true," said Scribd CEO Trip Adler. "We think this could really change the book publishing's business model and change people's reading behaviour." THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Happy... Batik Day?

Models show off outfits by designer Embran Nawawi, who launched a new line of Maduranese stamp batik clothing on Tuesday in Surabaya, Indonesia. On Oct. 2, 2009, the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization (UNESCO) formally recognized Indonesian batik as a world heritage tradition, and since then, the date has been used to mark Batik Day. ROBERTUS PUDYANTO/GETTY IMAGES

Telecom

'Dirt cheap' mobile prices can't last, report concludes

A new report says that Canada's small wireless companies have undercut Rogers, Bell and Telus by more than half on voice and data prices in recent years, giving consumers lower cellphone bills. But it also says that these prices aren't sustainable. The Convergence Consulting Group report says that the smaller wireless players can't keep offering "dirt cheap" prices and stay in business.
THE CANADIAN PRESS

Market Minute

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OIL
$102.04 US (-29¢)

GOLD
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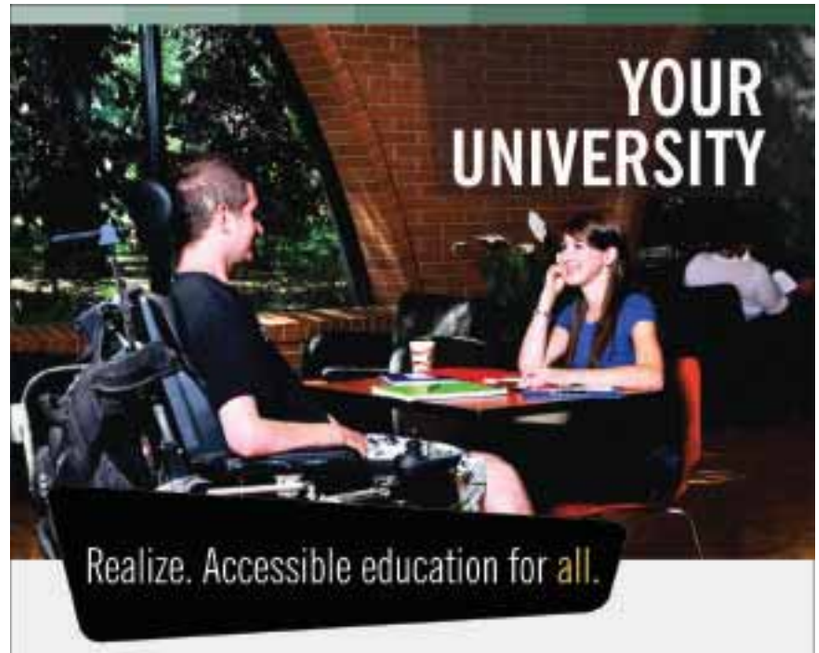
Natural gas: $3.61 US (+5¢)
Dow Jones: 15,191.70 (+62.03)



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- ✓ 270 – fall semester (2009)
- ✓ 305 – fall semester (2010)
- ✓ 377 – fall semester (2011)
- ✓ 398 – fall semester (2012)

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TRUE PATRIOT GENDER-NEUTRAL LOVE

JUST SAYIN'

Paul Sullivan
metronews.ca

Oh, Canada, here we go again.

Another attempt to revise the lyrics of our national anthem.

This time, a group of prominent Canadian women including Margaret Atwood and Kim Campbell want to change "In all thy sons command" to "In all of us command," which is OK by me. I could never quite get my head around, "In all thy sons command," anyway. It's not as if we talk like that.

"Like, true patriot love in all thy sons command."

"Whatever, dude."

The point is, the prominent women are feeling left out. They want Canada to command an upwelling of true patriot love in female glowing hearts as well, and who can blame them?

Of course, some people think it's a bad idea to mess with the lyrics of our national anthem. Is nothing sacred etc.? It might help them to know that the original 1908 lyrics include the phrase "thou dost in us command" which makes no sense at all but at least it's gender neutral.

They should also know that O Canada wasn't even our official national anthem until 1980. Before that it was God Save the Queen, which, like the Queen, goes on forever. O Canada is much snappier, especially now that some of the "dosts" "thous" "thees" and "thys" have been eliminated.

In the face of the argument that the prominent women are only seeking a revision of the revision, traditionalists will fall back on the problem that if you mess with one line, the whole thing opens up, encouraging people with nothing better to do than lobby for new words to the national anthem.

Take "our home and native land," for instance. In 1990, Toronto City Council actually voted to encourage the government to change it to "our home and cherished land" because some non-native Canadians might feel left out.

Not to worry. They're too busy trying to figure out "true patriot love in all thy sons command."

Meanwhile, the next generation has tuned out. According to a 2010 University of Victoria survey, nearly 70 per cent of high school students enrolled in choir don't know the lyrics to O Canada, regardless of the version. And that's the in-tune student body. Presumably the fail among the general population is even higher.

Traditionalists will argue that's because they don't sing the song at the start of the day at school anymore, and maybe they're right. In fact, the only place we do sing it is at football and baseball games, usually alongside the Star Spangled Banner, which doesn't make any sense either.

But that's OK. It's an opportunity for Beyoncé or Nikki Yanofsky to look good and sound good while they funk up the tune.

After all, we stand on guard for what so proudly we hailed at the twilight's last gleaming from far and wide. Don't we?

Visit metronews.ca to watch the video and share your opinion.

ZOOM

The horror of war in numbers

THEFALLEN9000.INFO PHOTOS

Stenciled bodies recall Normandy

In an awe-inspiring and emotional project, the silhouettes of 9,000 bodies were stenciled on a beach in Normandy, France, as a tribute to those who died during the Second World War.

Titled The Fallen 9000, the work served as a visual reminder of the Allied and German forces, and civilians, who died during the D-Day beach landings at Arromanches on June 6, 1944. METRO

Concept to creation

"It was a quiet and emotional statement about what happens in the absence of peace. After I made my first figure, I broke down crying."

Jamie Wardley, artist
Wardley, 33, came up with the idea for the project with Andy Moss, 50

Silhouettes erased but impression lasts

The two sculptors came up with the idea for the International Day of Peace, a global observance day instituted by the UN.

The sculptors from Bradford, England, spent two years organizing the event. The silhouettes were later erased by the tide, but the project's effect lives on.

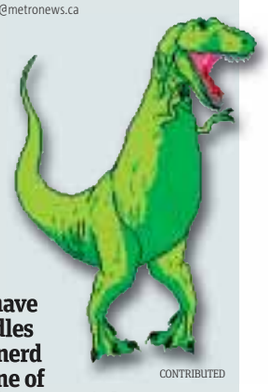
"Veterans are telling me how it brought home the impact war has," artist Jamie Wardley said. METRO

About 200 volunteers from various backgrounds and ages raked with stencils.

Clickbait

HANNAH ZITNER
hannah.zitner@metronews.ca

You know you've made an impact when you get an asteroid named after you, right? Web comic creator Randall (XKCD) Munroe (now of the Asteroid 4942 fame) has proven comedy and science/math/language/smart stuff can go hand in hand. Running since 2005, XKCD comics have evolved from scanned doodles to 3,000-panel time lapse nerd jokes. Though Munroe is one of the web comedy pioneers, he's certainly not alone.



CONTRIBUTED

Perry Bible Fellowship:

Running as a weekly comic in the mid-2000s, getting a book deal in 2011 and now publishing 'whenever,' PBF's humping dinosaurs, pregnant teenage chickens and bad apples are a staple of Internet comics.

Dinosaur Comics:

Celebrating its 2,500th (at least according to the URL) comic Tuesday, Dinosaur Comics somehow manages to keep the LOLs rolling using the same six panels featuring a green T-Rex and a gay (they say) Utahraptor.

Twitter

@metropicks asked: A chemical used to make plastic was found on a Saturn moon. How do you feel knowing that outer space is pretty much Tupperware?

@WTarcisio: To me, this is nothing new. My life has not changed at all.

@lester04: is it dishwasher safe?

Follow @metropicks and take part in our daily poll.

Comments

RE: 89-Year-Old Toronto Woman Ready To Go To Jail Over Census Fight, published Oct. 1

This woman has excellent intentions but there are many other places to have an impact in the world.

These companies are involved in all kind of industries. Wars don't happen because of war industries, much as we would like to believe this because it absolves us of responsibility. **BugsBunny posted to metronews.ca**

WE WANT TO HEAR FROM YOU: Send us your comments: reginaletters@metronews.ca

metro

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Gravity can get heavy but it will pull you in nonetheless. CONTRIBUTED

Stomaching zero-gravity

Interview. Alfonso Cuarón talks about making space film and surviving the Vomit Comet

NED EHRBAR
Metro World News in Hollywood

Alfonso Cuarón apologizes for the delay in bringing his latest film, Gravity, to the masses, but properly presenting outer space turned out to be a tough nut to crack. And rest assured, the results are worth the wait. Plus, Cuarón got to discover a new favourite past-time: Experiencing zero-gravity on the Vomit Comet.

I suppose my first question after seeing this film is: how?
Well, the first thing is we're trying to do a film that takes place in space but that looks like those Imax documentaries that you're used to seeing. We didn't want it to look like a comic book or a fantasy rendering of space. So that was the point of the departure. The rest of the conversation was, "OK, how the heck are we going to do it?" So we tried several existing technologies. Nothing existed that we could use so we had to invent our own tools. And then four and a half years later, here we are.

You just get such fluid camera motion, which you've always had, but it's amplified here.
It's because there's no up and there's no down. That's the thing, we wanted to honour the physics and the mechanics in zero-G, including not only the character and the objects but the camera. A lot of that was informed by doing tests in different systems and possibilities, including parabolic flights — the Vomit Comet. Once you're floating you don't have much control. Your inertia dictates how you move. We talked about that, that the camera was also in zero-G, the camera is not controlled.

Did you get sick on the Vomit Comet?
No, I loved it. The stunt man actually threw up, but I didn't. I loved it, I loved it. It's really amazing, it's so much fun. And I'm a wimp with roller coasters, I cannot stand them. But this one, I could do it all day long. The beautiful thing of the parabolic flight is when you start floating, for me it was one of those things that felt almost primal and familiar.

Did you feel much resistance from the studio about the idea of a female lead?
No, no. There's the expression in the film, "Houston in the blind," which is a real expression when there's no communication, and the studio was in the blind. They were paying all this money to develop a technology that we didn't know was going to work, then investing in a shoot that we didn't know was going to work, then on top of that after the shoot they weren't able to see anything for eight months. And then we arrived to our release date a year ago and we were not ready. They said, "Do you need a couple of months?" "No, we need a year." And they had to keep on going. And with Sandy, yeah obviously when you are at some early stage there are voices that say, "Why don't you do it with a male lead? It's more exciting and we can have these actors. These kind of movies work better with a male lead." Yeah, you have some voices, but the moment that I said that I couldn't envision this film with a male lead, they were OK with it. There was no huge pressure.

I still get angry about the botched release of Children of Men, which was criminally overlooked when it came out.
I guess it was the release and stuff, but frankly maybe it was that it didn't connect with audiences, you know?

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The Word

Cher still has no problem telling it like it is

ALEXANDRA CAVALLO
Metro World News

You know who is one of the baddest mamba jambas in the music industry, to this day? Cher. Do not even try and tell me that Cher is not the coolest old lady around, because I am armed with irrefutable evidence with which to counter you.

Firstly, she called out Madonna — one of the other old ladies still behaving like a boss in the biz — for being, well, for being kind of a B.

Secondly, she threw said shade at Madge in a Reddit forum.

Yes! Cher is older than my mother, who has just barely mastered the fine art of electronic mail, but the lady is well-versed in the ways of the Internet nether-regions.

Over the weekend, she logged on for an Ask me Anything open forum on Reddit (oh, by the way, she introduces herself on said forum thusly: "Hi, I'm Cher, I'm 100 years old") during which someone asked why she hated Madonna.

Cher, being the classy yet truth-spitting broad that she is, responded, "I never hated her; I just thought she was a bitch."

And that, my friends, is 'nuff said.

METRO DISH

OUR TAKE ON THE WORLD OF CELEBRITIES

Amanda Bynes. ALL PHOTOS GETTY IMAGES

Amanda Bynes' meltdown just got way less funny

Amanda Bynes has been formally diagnosed with schizophrenia and bipolar disorder, according to Radar Online.

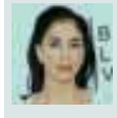
"It was what Amanda's parents, Rick and Lynn, had suspected all along," a source says.

"Nevertheless, it was difficult to process for Amanda's parents. The bright side is that Amanda can lead a long, normal life as long as she takes her medication. Doctors at the treatment facility are still working to get Amanda therapeutic meds and she is responding to the medications she is being given to treat her dual diagnosis."

Twitter

@ABFoundation
The govt is shut down but BP is still open. This country is in big trouble.

@KellyOsbourne
I really do wish all the #GrammarPolice on twitter would f--- off! Its Twitter not Mensa!



@SarahKSilverman
I love that wearing sweats on a flight makes some people crazy. Who r u dressin up for, ding-dong? flying's a sport.

Miley majored in twerking instead

Miley Cyrus

Before embarking on her post-Disney career, Miley Cyrus admits she flirted with the idea of going to college.

"I kind of like the way Mary-Kate and Ashley (Olsen) did it. They were bajillionaires from being these kid stars, and they decided that that wasn't the future that they wanted," she tells Rolling Stone.

Jodie Foster has a new girl

Jodie Foster

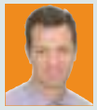
Jodie Foster and photographer Alexandra Hedison are reportedly dating, according to E! News.

"It's pretty serious," a source says. "They're totally in love." Hedison previously dated Ellen DeGeneres before the talk show host got involved with Portia de Rossi.

Foster and Hedison began turning heads over the summer at events in both Los Angeles and New York.

Italy

There IS something to rent in Tuscany



ON THE MOVE
Loren Christie
life@metronews.ca

Want to plan the perfect week in Tuscany? Here's how to make this bucket list holiday to Italy a reality.

Vacation at a villa. Do your research and compile a list of must–haves such as Internet access, swimming pool and number of bedrooms required. Get testimonials from past guests. The pleasant surprise with a villa is a large group will often pay less than they would in a hotel. I recently rented a gorgeous 500-year-old villa outside of Cortona with eight friends and it cost us $500 per person for the week.

Rent a car or bike. Iconic Italian cities like Florence and Siena are easily accessible and worth exploring, but to truly discover the hidden gems of Tuscany, you need your own wheels. The charming towns of Montepulciano, Cortona and San Gimignano are just a few of the dozens worth a visit. If you are pedalling on your own steam, I would recommend that you are in good shape, as the countryside is hilly. If you are renting a car, go small as some of the streets can be narrow.

Taste the local flavours. Forget fusion; a good meal in Tuscany is about celebrating what's in season. Whether mushrooms, truffles or tomatoes, eat the food that is fresh. Make sure to sample the regional specialties, such as Florentine steak, Pienza's pecorino cheese or my personal favourite, wild boar pasta.

Hit a winery. Many of the wineries in Tuscany do not like walk-ins, especially if you are travelling in larger groups, so call and reserve a tasting in advance. Ask if there is a restaurant on-site and enjoy your tasting along with a meal. I recommend the Salcheto Winery just outside of Montepulciano. The view from their lunch table was incredible.

And don't forget to take a soak.

In Italy a day at the spa is about soaking, steaming and mud baths.

The beach at the Fairmont Southampton hotel is perfect for swimming. The rocks off shore make a great diving spot, too. JIM BYERS/METRO

Soak in the sun and sights of Bermuda

Kick back. The weather is hot and the vibe is cool in this tropical paradise

JIM BYERS
@jimbyerstravel
jimbyerstravel.com

You probably know about the golf. And you might think there are a lot of guys in funny shorts and long socks. But Bermuda is more hip than you might expect.

A climb to the top of Gibbs Hill Lighthouse reveals fabulous views of colourful houses, deep bays and the string of islands. JIM BYERS/METRO

Drinking

There are two traditional drinks in Bermuda. The Dark and Stormy has ginger beer, dark Gosling's rum (no other kind counts) and lime juice. Folks rave about Bermuda's Rum Swizzles but I found the one I tried at the famous White Horse Tavern in Bermuda far too sweet. In the main town of Hamilton, the Pickled Onion is a sleek affair that wouldn't look out of place in Toronto's Yorkville or Vancouver's Yaletown. When I was there drinks included "Pink Panties" and "The Black Banana." Ahem. Flanagan's Irish Pub on Front Street in Hamilton has reasonable prices and a second-storey patio overlooking the harbour.

Sleeping

The Fairmont Southampton is a pink beauty on a hill along the south shore. There's a great beach and it's adjacent to marvellous Horseshoe Bay. Rooms in October go from about $330 a night. I stayed at a casual but adorable spot in the village of St. George's called the Crooked Elbow, close to a couple of nice beaches and cool forts and only a short walk from shops and pubs. It's got lots of space and goes for about $150 a night in high season, with a five night minimum.

Dining

St. George's has a couple of places on the waterfront, including Tavern on the Sea (decent food; great views). The online reviews are good but at dinner in St. George's I found Wahoo's Bistro only adequate. The Waterlot Inn, affiliated with the Fairmont Southampton, is a stunner. I had a three-steak tasting menu that was $60 but it beat the heck out of Ruth's Chris. The service is terrific and the sticky toffee pudding with vanilla ice cream will have you singing with joy. Stuff yourself at the Jamaica Grill in Hamilton with jerk chicken, rice and peas and other Jamaican delights in a cheap but fun neighbourhood joint. Mickey's sits on the edge of Elbow Beach and you can dine a few inches from the sand. They do a lovely grilled seafood platter with scallops, shrimp, salmon, local fish, octopus and tender calamari, plus veggies and mashed potatoes, for about $40.

Doing

Bermuda is famous for reefs that have caused many a shipwreck; bad if you're a sailor but great if you're a diver. May to October offers the best chance for calm, clear water and is the best time for swimming, especially on exposed south shore beaches. You also can try horseback rides or rent bikes or mopeds, which are everywhere. Or explore the shops and fun streets in St. George's, including Featherbed Alley and Old Maids Lane. Oh, OK, you are a golfer? There are courses galore, none more famous perhaps than Port Royal, where they hold the annual PGA Grand Slam event, featuring the winners of golf's four major tournaments (Oct. 14 to 16 this year). One too many rum swizzles? Climb the Gibbs Hill lighthouse to work off some calories and soak in views of all Bermuda's islands.

‘Faux’ mini cheesecakes are full of real good-for-you flavour

Ingredients

- 2 cups (500 ml) raw cashews
- 1/2 cup (125 m) chopped pitted dates (about 5)
- 1 lb (500 ml) strawberries
- 1 large fully ripened avocado from Mexico, halved, pitted and peeled
- 3/4 cup (175 ml) coconut oil
- 1/4 cup (60 ml) lemon juice
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) raw agave syrup
- 1/2 tsp (2 m) raw vanilla extract
- 12 fresh strawberries, sliced (garnish)

Crust

- 1 1/2 cups (375 ml) chopped or sliced raw almonds
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) shredded unsweetened coconut
- 1/4 tsp (1 ml) salt
- 1/2 cup (125 ml) chopped pitted dates (about 5)

1. In bowl, place cashews and dates. Pour in enough water to cover; let stand for 1 hour. Drain.

2. Meanwhile, mist 24, 1/2 cup (125 ml) ramekins (or other similar-sized freezeproof molds) with cooking spray. Line each with plastic wrap, leaving enough to create a bit of an overhang for “handles.”

3. Crust: In food processor, add almonds, shredded coconut and salt; pulse until in coarse crumbs. Add dates; pulse until well combined. Divide and press into bottoms of ramekins.

4. In high-power blender, or in clean food processor bowl, add drained cashews and dates, the strawberries, avocado, coconut oil, lemon juice, syrup and vanilla. Process until very smooth. Pour over bases; freeze until firm, at least 2 hours.

Strawberry-Coconut ‘Cheese’ Cake

This recipe makes 24 mini-cake servings. MISSAVACADO.CA

5. Remove from freezer 30 to 60 minutes before serving (or, move to refrigerate up to 1 day ahead); remove plastic wrap, plate individual cakes, and let thaw. To garnish, top each with sliced strawberries.

MISSAVACADO.CA

Drink of the Week

Kick Start PB and J Smoothie

- 1 ripe banana
- 1 cup (250 ml) 3% plain yogurt
- 1 cup (250 ml) ice cubes
- 1/3 cup (75 ml) PC Blue Menu No-Stir Smooth Peanut Butter with Meg-3
- 1/4 cup (50 ml) PC Blue Menu Twice the Fruit Strawberry Spread
- 1/2 tsp (2 ml) vanilla

In blender, combine banana, yogurt, ice cubes, peanut butter, strawberry spread and vanilla. Purée until smooth and silky. Divide among four glasses. **PRESIDENT’S CHOICE**

What are you, some sort of expert?

A word to the wise on what it takes to advise. Do you have the goods to take on a career in the consulting field?

MEGHAN GREAVES
TalentEgg.ca

Are you thinking about a career in consulting?

If so, you’re probably wondering what it takes to be successful in the industry. Since there are many fields within consulting, diverse personalities and dispositions can find an excellent career fit as a consulting professional.

However, successful consultants tend to have a core group of personality traits that they apply to different extents in their discipline.

You’re a “people person”

As a consultant, you’ll be working with your team and multiple clients, so you’re bound to feel like an outsider at some point or another.

Consultants need to be able to remove the barrier between themselves and their clients to build trust and confidence. In order to do this you need to feel comfortable working in different environments and with different people on a daily basis.

Above and beyond

You’re willing to go the extra mile, and then some

- Solving problems, influencing your clients and creating innovative ideas are just the tip of the iceberg for consultants.
- To be successful, you need to enjoy getting lots done for your clients. Companies hire consultants because they want their expertise, so to impress them you must give that and more — and enjoy doing it!

You’re a multi-tasker

As a consultant, you’ll have to constantly manage multiple clients, all of whom come to you with different tasks, questions, concerns and suggestions.

Your plate will always be full. The trick to not getting overwhelmed is to prioritize your tasks effectively so each client’s needs are met.

If you find that multi-tasking comes naturally to you, a career in consulting may just be your calling.

You’re passionate

Not only do consultants have to be passionate about their industry; they have to be just as passionate about helping clients. A client can tell if you truly care about his or her success.

You’re confident

Everyone has bad days no matter what field they work in. A great consultant can get back on the horse when things aren’t going smoothly. While doing this, you’ll also need to motivate your team to keep chugging along and provide them with solutions to the problems ahead.

As a consultant you’ll get tough feedback, experience setbacks and make difficult decisions. A successful consultant can push through these barriers with confidence.

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If it makes you happy to make others happy, and you know where your career passion lies, then get your consulting career cracking! ISTOCK

Get excited about fall

Activities. A change in season means there are plenty of things a family can do together

MICHELLE WILLIAMS
For Metro

Fall provides an abundance of family-friendly activities for parents and kids. Get excited about fall with some of these fun ideas.

Go "leafing"
Go for a drive to see the colourful leaves. "Talk with your kids about why the seasons change and collect leaves from different trees," said Katie Bugbee, senior managing editor and global parenting expert for care.com. "When you get home, have kids make leaf rubbings by taping a leaf to cardboard, layering a piece of paper over it and gently colouring over the leaf with a crayon."

Visit a farmers' market
It's harvest time and with so many fruits and vegetables in season, there is plenty for kids to see and do and lots of good things to eat. "Many farmers' markets also host special fall festivals, so check your local calendars," Bugbee said.

Volunteer
During this special season of thanks, volunteering is a great family activity. "Choose a charity that's important to your family and figure out the best way to give back," Bugbee said. "Consider raking leaves at a nursing home or helping out at a local animal shelter. Kids will look forward to volunteering if you make it a fun and personal experience."

Make a giving tree
"This is a great opportunity for the entire family to think about all the wonderful things that have happened in the last year," Bugbee said. Cut out paper leaves and have family members write what they are thankful for on them. Then attach them to a paper cutout of a tree. Leave a stack of blank leaves nearby and encourage everyone to add more thoughts as they think of them.

Volunteering

> **"Consider raking leaves at a nursing home or helping out at a local animal shelter. Kids will look forward to volunteering if you make it a fun and personal experience."**
> Katie Bugbee, senior managing editor and global parenting expert for care.com

Pick out a pumpkin
Kids are already getting excited about Halloween, so find a local pumpkin patch and make a day of it. "While you're there, enjoy the abundance of fall offerings — wander through a corn maze, eat an apple cider doughnut or hop on a hayride," Bugbee said. Instead of carving a jack-o'-lantern this year, decorate your pumpkin with glitter, buttons or paint. "This cuts down on the mess and makes it easier for younger kids to be involved."

Volunteering, like raking leaves at a nursing home, is a great family activity during this season of thanks. FUSE/THINKSTOCK

There is something romantic about picking apples in the crisp, cool air amid the beautiful colours of fall. ISTOCK/THINKSTOCK

Couples. Turn over a beautiful new leaf

Cosy up for fall with some outdoor fun to enjoy with your special someone. Connect with one of these fall favourites, recommended by Lavalife's Carmelia Ray, Lava365.com dating and relationship expert.

Check out an Oktoberfest event. It's a great date idea for couples. "Exploring different foods and cultures allows you to enjoy new experiences and create new traditions together."

Go apple picking. There is something romantic and nostalgic about the crisp, cool air and the beautiful colours of fall. "Visit a local orchard, then take home your freshly picked apples and make your own apple juice, ciders, pastries and apple pie."

Knock something off your bucket list together. What's more memorable than doing those things you have always dreamed about doing with someone you love? "These moments make some of the best lasting memories and experiences a couple can share."

Plan an outdoor photo or video shoot. Taking pictures of each other is fun and romantic. "Social sharing apps like Instagram or Pic Stitch let you quickly capture special moments in a fun and easy way."

Shop for Halloween costumes or make your own. Dedicate an afternoon to finding outfits that really play to your personalities. "I always like to encourage couples to step outside of their comfort zone and get a little adventurous. Get creative and have fun spending time together."

Have a pumpkin carving contest. A little friendly competition never hurt anybody, and can actually add some serious spice to your date. "You can make a mini-contest, like who can carve a pumpkin the fastest, and set it up as a win-win scenario. If he loses, he gets to give you a massage. If she loses, she gets to make you your favourite sandwich."

Go for an outdoor hike or bike ride. "Couples who play together stay together." Physical activity has many health benefits, and the bonus is you can have a lot of fun getting active. "And couples who share the same lifestyle and health habits actually live longer and experience a closer bond."

MICHELLE WILLIAMS

Join us for the Pumpkin Princess Pageant!!
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www.pumpkinhollow.ca
or call the Pumpkin Hollow Hotline at 306-731-1479

Carl Crawford and the Dodgers will take on the Braves in one of two National League Division Series. STEPHEN DUNN/GETTY IMAGES

Comeback trail leads to playoff baseball

MLB. L.A.'s Crawford, Detroit's Martinez among those injured in 2012 who have played key roles in 2013

A year ago at this time, all Victor Martinez could do was watch.

The Detroit Tigers rolled through the American League playoffs, but Martinez was still recovering from a knee injury that cost him the entire season. There would be no World Series for him — he could only hope for a healthier 2013 and another shot at post-season play.

"It's a long road I came from," Martinez said recently. "It was a tough year rehabbing, a whole year. I needed two surgeries. It was just tough. For three months I couldn't put any weight on my leg. I spent literally a whole year from January to January rehabbing."

That hard work is finally paying off for Martinez, who helped Detroit to its third straight AL Central title this year. Martinez is one of several standouts in this post-season who missed significant time either this year or in 2012, and these players are as thankful as anyone for the chance to be on the field when the games matter most.

"It's like day and night," Los Angeles Dodgers outfielder Carl Crawford said. "Last year I couldn't play because I had surgery and I was home watching the playoffs. But now I'm back on the field playing again and I'm going to the playoffs with a chance of going to the World Series and winning it. So it's been a great change for me, and hopefully I can play well in the playoffs and take us as far as I can."

Crawford had reconstructive elbow surgery last year, shortly before being traded from Boston to Los Angeles. He's also battled hamstring issues this year, but he hit .283 in 116 games for the NL West champion Dodgers. Los Angeles also added reliever Brian Wilson down the stretch — he hadn't pitched in the majors since he was with San Francisco in April 2012, the same month he underwent Tommy John surgery on his right elbow.

In 18 appearances for the Dodgers, Wilson posted a 0.66 ERA. THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

On the web

Go to metronews.ca for coverage of Tuesday night's NL wild-card game.

CFL awards

Kackert named Week 14's top offensive player

Chad Kackert has been named the CFL's offensive player of the week for his role in helping the Toronto Argonauts come back and beat the Edmonton Eskimos 34-22 on the weekend.

Argos kick returner Trent Guy picked up special teams honours for his role in the win.

B.C. Lions linebacker Adam Bighill took the defensive player award, while Calgary Stampeder slotback Jabari Arthur was named top Canadian.

Kackert ran for a season-high 155 yards in Saturday's win over Edmonton, including touchdown rushes of 49 and five yards, as the Argos won their fourth road game in a row.

THE CANADIAN PRESS

1-on-1

I'd beat LeBron in my prime: Jordan

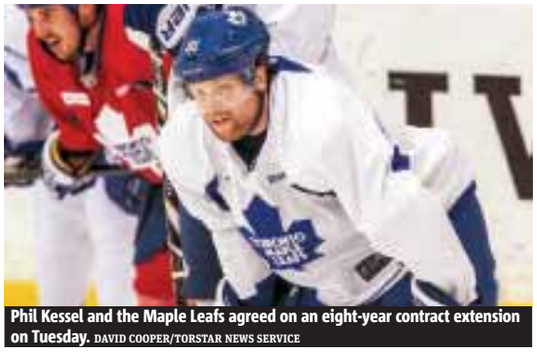
NBA legend Michael Jordan believes he could've beat LeBron James in a one-on-one basketball game when he was in his prime.

He's not sure about Kobe Bryant.

In a video promoting the NBA 2K14 video game that was released Tuesday, Jordan said there's a long list of players he would've liked to have played one-on-one. "I don't think I would lose," Jordan said in the video, before smiling and adding, "Other than to Kobe Bryant because he steals all of my moves."

THE ASSOCIATED PRESS

Kessel cashes in with 8-year extension



Phil Kessel and the Maple Leafs agreed on an eight-year contract extension on Tuesday. DAVID COOPER/TORSTAR NEWS SERVICE

Phil Kessel got his wish to make it a long stay with the Toronto Maple Leafs.

What general manager Dave Nonis called "short and productive" negotiations ended with Kessel signing a $64-million US, eight-year contract on Tuesday.

The deal has a salary cap hit of $8 million per season. It begins in 2014-15 and runs through the 2021-22 season.

"I'll be on the hook for some team dinners here or there, but I don't mind," Kessel said at a news conference before Tuesday night's season opener at Montreal. "I always wanted to be (in Toronto).

"This is the place I want to play. I want to finish my career here. It's a great city, the organization's unbelievable, and I'm really excited to continue here."

The contract includes a limited no-trade clause. Kessel has one season left on his previous deal at $5.4 million.

General manager Dave Nonis said negotiations started last week when Kessel, who could have become an unrestricted free agent next July, told him he wanted to remain a Leaf.

"There weren't negotiations early in camp," said Nonis. "I wanted to hear him tell me he wanted to be a Toronto Maple Leaf and once he did, we were able to work quickly and reach an agreement."

THE CANADIAN PRESS

2013 stat line

The speedy right-winger had 20 goals and 52 points in 48 games last season.

The 2013 Toyota RAV4

ALL PHOTOS CONTRIBUTED

Review. Toyota's aim to recreate success of '90s model falls short but reliability is still assured

When Toyota introduced its RAV4 model back in 1994 it was an unusual, quirky and clever car. Stylish to look at, it created a whole new segment for compact crossover SUVs; there was even a three-door version, which is unusual even now.

The vehicle was aimed at trendy, young, (mostly) urban drivers, but in the 19 years since its release, the competition has got much tougher and Toyota has rather fallen off the pace. Toyota is aiming to attract a range of different drivers with this latest model, which is why the 2013 RAV4 is available in five configurations, with 2.5-litre gas, all-wheel drive and continuously variable transmission (CVT), a 2.5-litre diesel with front-wheel drive and six-speed manual transmission and a 2.5-litre diesel with four-wheel drive. However, all models in Canada are only available in six-speed automatic transmission using only gas.

This fourth generation RAV4 (which stands for Recreational Active Vehicle, Four-Wheel Drive) aims to elevate Toyota back to the top of the class with a RAV4 which is bigger, better and more practical than ever. The biggest new feature in the 2013 RAV4 is the rear lift gate which opens upwards (earlier models had the door opening sideways) and the rear-mounted spare tire is now inside the vehicle.

Best thing

Despite its failings, the new 2013 Toyota RAV4 is a safe choice for sensible drivers who will be happy with its middle-of-the-road performance; who don't want a car to be desirable but dependable.

Worst thing

The "sport button," which is supposed to add pace and drama, is so badly tucked away that you have to search for it. Worst of all, switching it on only seems to increase the engine noise — not the engine's response — so its sporty paddle shifters feel impotent.

METRO

The 2013 Toyota RAV4

- **Top speed.** 185km/h
- **Engines (hp).** Four 2.0 litre or plus options available
- **0 to 100km/h.** 10.0 sec.
- **Fuel consumption** 5.9/100km
- **Base price (incl. destination)** From $23,790

Interior

The interior is spacious and the trunk is big but the cabin is letdown by the use of some hard plastics and dull styling. The new RAV4 doesn't feel as lovely as it should.

Exterior

The unusual styling that the RAV4 was known for has been replaced by a far more generic-looking SUV. Its body has sharper edges and a stronger grille but it has lost some of its unique RAV4 personality, which is a shame.

Performance

The ride is too firm, resulting in a car that doesn't feel particularly relaxing to drive or comfortable around town. Even our test of the 2.2-litre diesel auto AWD version (not available in Canada) didn't feel fast and required frequent gear changes to get the most out of it.

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Wax on, wax off but don't forget to polish

Driving force. Protecting your vehicle's finish is a three-step process

JIL MCINTOSH
drive@metronews.ca

Your vehicle's paint is very durable, but it can use the protection of a coat of wax. Before you put on the shine, though, you should prepare the surface to get the maximum benefit of the product you're using.

"People believe that you wash your car, and then you wax your car, but a key step in between is polish," says Dave Lambert, brand manager for Autoglym Canada. "It's a three-step process of wash, polish, and protect."

If it's possible, your car should be hand-washed, using a sponge or soft cloth, and a pH-neutral car wash product. Lambert says that many people believe that "swirl marks" in the finish are caused by overenthusiastic waxing, but in reality, they're imperfections in the paint caused by car wash brushes.

Any rough surface can potentially cause marks in the paint, and you should always use a clean chamois or microfibre towel specifically made for vehicles. Cotton bath towels or terry towels are too abrasive and shouldn't be used.

The second stage — applying polish — preps the clean surface for the final top coat of wax. Although your paint may look smooth, when seen under a microscope, it's more like a lunar landscape of hills and gullies, and it can appear dull when the light hits this uneven surface. The polish fills in these microscopic valleys, providing a smooth surface for the final top coat of wax.

There are many types of wax on the market, but Lambert says that a paste wax containing carnauba wax will last the longest. "A lot of people say they want 100 per cent carnauba wax, but in its pure form it's hard enough to scratch your paint," he says. "In a test tube, it actually rattles. Nothing is pure carnauba alone, and there will be other (ingredients) in there as well."

Several factors will affect how long your car stays shiny, including the weather and where you park, but Lambert says that a quality wax product, properly applied, should last five to six months. "We recommend once before the summer, and once in preparation for winter," he says. The car should be polished and waxed again if the shine starts to go away, or if water doesn't form round beads on the surface.

Remember step 2

"People believe that you wash your car, and then you wax your car, but a key step in between is polish."
Dave Lambert, brand manager for Autoglym Canada

Waxing your car regularly helps to preserve its shine. AUTOGLYM CANADA

Facts and tips

- **Top wax.** Carnauba wax comes from a palm tree native to Brazil. It forms on the leaves, which are collected and dried, and then beaten to separate the wax from the plant.
- **Wash wise.** If you drop your sponge when washing your car, never use it until you've thoroughly rinsed it. If you don't, the dirt it picked up will scratch your paint.
- **Shade is best.** It's best to wash and wax your car in the shade, and when the paint surface is cool to the touch.

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Horoscopes

♈ Aries
March 21 - April 20
The Sun and Pluto will send your emotions into overdrive today. If there is someone in your life who doubts your love and desire they won't be left in any doubt at all over the next few days. You're on fire.

♉ Taurus
April 21 - May 21
Demand that work colleagues and employers treat you with the respect you deserve. And if they don't? Then you will just have to look around for better people to work with and for.

♊ Gemini
May 22 - June 21
You may find it hard to control your emotions today but that's good. Usually you're so happy-go-lucky people think you never get annoyed but it isn't true and they must know.

♋ Cancer
June 22 - July 23
Quick decisions are not always good decisions, so take your time and get it right. Some people may be annoyed that you can't seem to make up your mind about something but their feelings don't count.

♌ Leo
July 24 - Aug. 23
You may be tempted to walk away from a situation that is getting you down but if you do you are likely to regret it. With the Sun at odds with Pluto today this is not a good time for grand gestures.

♍ Virgo
Aug. 24 - Sept. 23
Your natural distrust could cost you today, especially if you hesitate to take advantage of what appears to be a genuine proposal. Common sense should tell you the offer is legit.

♎ Libra
Sept. 24 - Oct. 23
Your head and heart will pull you in different directions today. If you are smart, you will realize whatever you choose will have consequences, so put off making a decision until the end of the week.

♏ Scorpio
Oct. 24 - Nov. 22
You have worked hard to get to your present position and have no intention of letting others take it away from you. Today's Sun-Pluto link will bring a challenge of some sort. Are you up to it? Of course you are.

♐ Sagittarius
Nov. 23 - Dec. 21
Opportunities you never knew existed will come knocking over the next few days but each will have a responsibility attached, so think carefully before you take advantage.

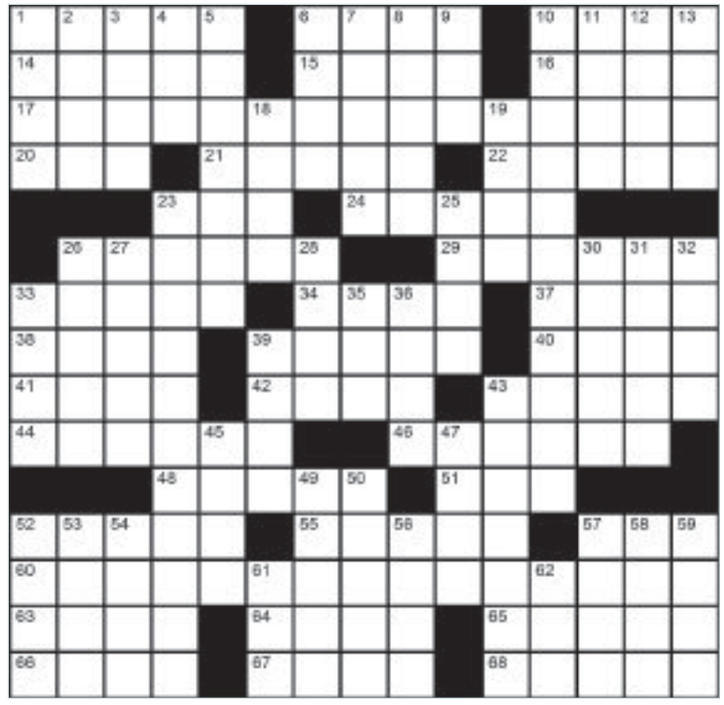
♑ Capricorn
Dec. 22 - Jan. 20
You are always ambitious and always competitive but the current cosmic picture could make you excessively determined to win. Be careful who you annoy on the way up — because you might meet them again on the way down.

♒ Aquarius
Jan. 21 - Feb. 19
The planets suggest you are well placed to move up in the world. All you have to do is get serious about your dreams. A change of scenery could change your outlook.

♓ Pisces
Feb. 20 - March 20
It's good make grand plans for your future but can you afford to make a big leap forward of some kind now? If not, start small. SALLY BROMPTON

Crossword: Canada Across and Down

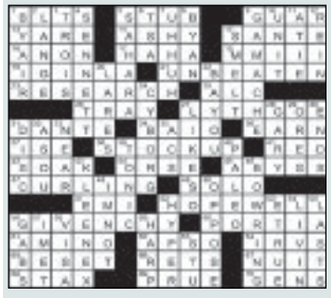
See today's answers at metronews.ca/answers.
BY KELLY ANN BUCHANAN



Across
1. Chocolate substitute
6. Mater's mate
10. Street performer
14. Earth's sky layer
15. Toilets, British-style
16. Paradise
17. Like the people at #26-Across: 2 wds.
20. Surgery sites, for short
21. "Have a Little Faith in Me" by John __
22. "Bust _ __" by Young MC
23. Certain conifer
24. Car company
26. Prehistoric culture of North America
29. Sci-Fi writer, Isaac __ (b.1920 - d.1992)
33. Beethoven's title lady
34. Hold off
37. Elizabeth Taylor's title
38. Gets workers for
39. Actress Olivia
40. Mountain goat's rock
41. Roman Numeral for 2501
42. Like fine wine
43. Matches
44. "Together Forever" singer Rick
46. "Blue Suede Shoes" bit: "Well, it's __ __ the money..."
48. __ Tuck
51. Compass point
52. Studio sign: 2 wds.
55. Canadian communications company
57. Jump
60. 501 __ __. NW (Canadian Embassy's locale in Washington, DC)
63. Desert weather
64. Ms. West's
65. Weasel kin
66. Much
67. Shortened helper
68. Beatles-style of jacket

Down
1. Small salmon
2. Cote d'__ (French Riviera)
3. Director Mr. Howard's
4. Man. neighbour
5. Bzzz-er's abode
6. Sea lettuce
7. Reluctant
8. Purposeful saying
9. Fireplace residue
10. "Come on down to the __ __ and I will / Buy you a bottle of wine..." - Joni Mitchell, "Carey"
11. Prefix meaning 'Thought'
12. Mr. Griffin
13. 'ence' word-ending alternative
18. Rihanna's nickname
19. Actor, George __
23. Dinosaur tooth, whale bone ...and others: 2 wds.
25. Decorator Mr. Berkus
26. Red Lobster servings
27. Swiss chocolate brand
28. Swallow swiftly
30. "The X Factor" host Mr. Lopez
31. Noted astrologer Sydney
32. Carrots, celery, e.g.
33. Title role for Gwyneth in 1996
35. Saloon serving
36. Oliver! song: "__ Anything": 2 wds.
39. "The __ _ Feel" by Gordon Lightfoot
43. CPP = Canada __ Plan
45. Misjudges
47. Nine: German
49. He was a Titan
50. Dreams: French
52. October birthstone
53. Emperor of Rome
54. Have _ __ to pick
56. Endure
57. Possesses, olde-style
58. Complete
59. Place inSouth America
61. Singer Ms. Sumac
62. Did lunch

Yesterday's Crossword



Sudoku

How to play
Fill in the grid, so that every row, every column and every 3x3 box contains the digits 1-9. There is no math involved.

7			9	4	2			6
					3	8		
	2	6	8			3		
3	7		2		9	4		8
8								3
4		2	7		8		1	5
		8			6	7	9	
		9	4					
2			1	9	5			4

Yesterday's Sudoku

7	2	4	3	9	8	1	6	5
1	8	6	5	2	7	9	3	4
3	9	5	1	6	4	7	2	8
5	4	9	8	7	2	3	1	6
8	6	7	4	1	3	2	5	9
2	1	3	6	5	9	8	4	7
9	3	8	2	4	5	6	7	1
6	5	2	7	8	1	4	9	3
4	7	1	9	3	6	5	8	2

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